

Interview with Suzanne Tick for the Textile Art Magazine

Where did you grow up and where do you live now?

I grew up in the heart of the Midwest in a community called Bloomington Illinois. My father's family were third generation trash metal recyclers. So, I grew up around artists coming to the junk yard picking up detritus to use in their sculptures.

Do you have an artistic education?

I have a BFA from the University of Iowa majoring in Weaving and Printmaking.

Your career spans CEO, textile designer, weaver, and Vedic Meditation teacher. How do these roles influence each other in your daily practice?

Growing up around a family owned business on my dad's side and with a grandmother on my mother's side that made her way as a pastel portrait artist on black and white photographs in the 1930-1940 then a portrait painter in the 1950-1960's, And a mother who studied graphic design and did set design for the community theater for 40 years, creativity was in my DNA. I knew no other way. Working on set designs and sitting for my grandmother to have my portrait painted taught me patience, how to work with others and patience.

After college I had to work so I found my way through my mother's interior design trade magazines to the corporate textile industry. The ads portrayed textile businesses located in NYC so I began my journey tapping into the companies that I felt my woven portfolio would match best.

I recognized early on that I was better as a creative director outside of the company rather than inside.

I founded my own textile design studio and business in 1995 and became the creative director to two brands... KnollTextiles and C+A- Monterey and Crossley in the floor covering business ... I knew color and how to create patterns so it all merged together.

My Art career came ten years after founding my business and working in the corporate textile world. My clients that I shared my textiles and carpet with also saw my hand weavings. Thus, my commission hand weaving work began.

Working full on out of a work live building in NYC it became obvious to me that I needed help in calming down my nervous system.

This is how Vedic Meditation came into my life... at just the right time. Little did I know it would lead to me become a teacher of this signature mantra-based meditation technique that's been around for thousands of years. And works on de-exciting the nervous system.

Learning the technique led to advanced courses for two years which then led to 3 1/2 months in India training to be a teacher. All while keeping my positions in Textiles and Floorcovering ..Though by then with a company I founded Luum Textiles and Tarkett in the flooring business...

How does this all dovetail together? Textiles and carpet are both fiber based... all of the companies that I worked with have a core value of sustainability first. Both the textiles and the carpet play with color and pattern... It's understanding the technologies of the machines that manufacture the materials. And how to spin and create the yarns that we used...

As meditation deexcites the nervous system, any chaos that is embedded in my body was released and clear headed, organized thinking emerged... The more the meditation saturated my inner self the more abilities I gained. Everything was pulling together. PD, Marketing and Sales were all hand in hand for my business and then my teaching.

You maintain a hand weaving practice and create fine art woven sculptures from repurposed materials. What draws you to repurposed materials, and how do you convert waste into art?

I have tireless intrigue on how to transform found materials into woven sculptures. I love the challenge of what different materials offer, and I love the concept of transformation.

Sustainability and wellness are recurring themes in your work. Can you share a turning point or project that crystallized this focus for you?

There are many major projects that I was asked to pull together sustainable products for. The Gap Headquarters in SF, Apple Headquarters in Cupertino CA, Art for the Gates Foundation in Seattle, SFO airport in SF, NYTimes building in NYC, all informed my knowledge that I was heading in the right direction with my sustainable product development.

Sustainability often involves trade-offs. Can you share a project where you had to navigate compromises between aesthetics, performance, and environmental impact?

If the foundation of the material content is sound, you have a sound product.

I found it hard to find manufacturers that would take a risk on new types of yarn extrusion and development. Sometimes having to go outside of the industry to find the right manufacturer.

During the years leading up to Y2K I thought the world was going to be all about transparency... at look at where we are today... everybody sees everything ... good bad and tragic... real time.

Back in 1999 I created a see through panel fabric using a recycled monofilament fiber... it was contemporary and modern. We received a 40,000 yard order for the product right out of the gate. When the first 400 workstations arrived, the company could not believe they could see the system through the fabric. The name of the fabric was Transparency. The CEO of the company called and said he was dropping the fabric immediately.

I was then held responsible for unloading tens of thousands of yards of this fabric.

I came up with an alternative hard material use for the product and found a way to get it funded through the supply chain as my client was not willing to take a risk. It turned into a 40 million dollar business. Necessity is the mother of Invention.